

Roosevelt Base, Dispensary (Building No. 2)
Corner of Colorado Street and Richardson Avenue
~~Naval Station Long Beach~~
Long Beach
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-2663-B

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ROOSEVELT BASE, DISPENSARY (Building No. 2)

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Location: Corner of Colorado Street and Richardson Avenue, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator

Coordinates: 11.385330.3735290

Present Owner: U.S. Navy, Southwest Division, San Diego

Original Use: Dispensary

Present Use: Marine Corps Reserves

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, 5 structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, architectural style, and its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** Building 2 was completed in 1942 (Nav. S. and A. Form 277) as part of Contract NOy 4279.
2. **Architect:** The architects were Adrian Wilson, chief architect, and Paul R. Williams, associate architect, of the "Allied Engineers Inc., Architects and Engineers", a Los Angeles firm, whose project design team also included Donald R. Warren, chief engineer, S.B. Barnes, structural engineer, and E.L. Ellingwood, mechanical engineer.
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** The U.S. Navy bought a strip of 105 acres along Seaside Boulevard for \$1.00 from the City of Long Beach in 1940. The adjacent harbor was dredged and an additional 177 acres were added to the original. Roosevelt Base, including Building 2, was constructed on this fill. In 1994 the Station was closed and ownership resides with the U.S. Navy Southwest Division, in San Diego.
4. **Builder-contractor:** The contractors were Guy F. Atkinson of San Francisco and George Pollock of Sacramento, who joined forces and opened a local office for this large contract.
5. **Original Plans and construction:** Built in 1942 for \$276,312.67, this Marine Corps Building, measuring 190' 2" x 126', was a Dispensary. The original plans are on file in Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard.
6. **Alterations and additions:** The west wall windows have been infilled, and the original double doors on the west side were moved back to accommodate a handicap ramp. A handicap ramp, steps, and a new door were added on the north side. The truck garage opening on the north wing was infilled with a window wall and a door in 1970 (#17049). Aluminum frame windows replaced the original windows.

- B. Historical Context.** The construction of the Dispensary, Building 2, was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nationwide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations.

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Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233) and tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), and fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), and main gates (gate 1), and a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

Building 2, the Dispensary, during wartime handled the medical care for about 7500 officers and men attached to the Small Craft Training Center located within the boundary of Roosevelt Base. A number of ancillary temporary buildings, including sick officers and WAVES quarters, a medical stores building, and two wards were located north and east of the Dispensary. The Dispensary included not only doctors' offices, but a pharmacy, ward, solarium, dental facilities, and living space for the Hospital Corps. An operating room, laboratory, and X-Ray room were located in the north wing.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense down-sized at the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:** Building 2, facing south, is significant as an example of a combination of International and Mediterranean Revival styles. Its low-pitched hip roof with red tiles and wide overhanging eaves are noted elements of the Mediterranean Revival Style and the ribbon windows are distinctive features of the International Style.
2. **Condition :** Building 2 is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall Dimensions:** Building 2 is rectangular and measures 125' in width by 173'10" in length. It is a two-story building with a one-story wing to the north, forming an L shape. A small glass-enclosed sunporch is attached to the east side.
2. **Foundation:** Building 2 rests on a reinforced concrete pile foundation.
3. **Walls:** The walls of Building 2 are of reinforced concrete, 9" thick, with a 4' x 8' plywood form-board exposed finish.
4. **Structural system, framing:** Building 2 uses a reinforced concrete post and beam structural system.
5. **Porches:** A concrete porch is located at the front entrance of the building on the south side. The entry is flanked by integral raised concrete rectangular planters. Four concrete steps, covered with carpeting, lead to the porch landing at the front entrance.
6. **Chimneys:** None
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** Building 2 has five exterior doors. On the north side is a modern metal-frame, single glass pane door that opens to new concrete steps and a handicapped access ramp. The south side's main entry has a modern aluminum-frame, single-glass-panel double door recessed behind a projecting concrete frame and surrounded by a window wall of 14 square panes in broad metal frames. The east side has a single modern metal door that replaced the original large garage door, and a metal-frame, single glass panel door that provides access to the sun porch. On the west side is a recessed wood-frame double door flanked by two casement windows and topped by four fixed windows in metal sash.
 - b. **Windows:** The dominant feature of Building 2 are the sets of metal sash ribbon windows set in projecting concrete frames. The north side has a pair of casement windows, and eight sets of ribbon windows, two on the first floor and six on the second floor, with each set consisting of four pairs of casement windows. The main (south) side has seven sets of ribbon windows, three on the first floor and four on the second floor, with each set consisting of five pairs of casement windows. A five-pane vertical window is centrally located to light the stair well. On the west side of the main block are five sets of ribbon windows, two on the first floor, and three on the second floor,

with each set consisting of two pairs of metal sash casement windows. The west side of the north wing has a small fixed pane window and three top-hinged transom windows on the first floor; a large multi-paned window opening has been infilled. The main block on the east side has two sets of ribbon windows on the second floor, each set consisting of three pairs of casement windows. The sun porch is an all-glass enclosure with multi-paned square windows in metal sash. The east side of the north wing has seven top-hinged transom windows in the upper section of the wall, with aluminum frame replacements, three have air conditioning units and two are painted over. A modern glass window wall infills the former garage opening.

8. **Roof:**

- a. **Shape, covering:** The hip roof is covered with red shingle tiles, and the flat roof of the sunporch is covered with composition roofing.
- b. **Cornice, eaves:** Four-foot-wide overhanging concrete eaves have copper gutters, covers, and downspouts.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** None

C. **Description of Interior**

- 1. **Floor plans:** The total square footage of Building 2 is 17,998. There are 61 rooms, the majority of which are offices.
- 2. **Stairways:** The lobby has a russet-colored terrazzo stairway to the second floor. The stairwell is lit by a five-pane vertical window with a deep reveal. The back staircase is also terrazzo.
- 3. **Flooring:** The building has asphalt tile floors that have been covered in hall areas and offices with wall to wall carpeting.
- 4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The walls and ceilings are covered with smooth plaster. Some rooms have dropped ceilings of acoustic tile. The main corridor walls on the first floor have been covered with plastic paneling that extends over the transom windows above the doors.
- 5. **Openings:** There are 83 interior doors. The office doors are metal with transom windows and brass or metal door knobs. The old X-Ray room, now an office opposite the lobby, has a wire glass upper pane in the metal door. The double doors separating the lobby from other offices are wood frame with single panes of textured obscure glass.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** The stairs in the lobby are of russet-colored terrazzo with a plaster railing with decorative wood handrail, and a brass protective strip at the edge of each step. Varnished wood frames surround the interior of the entry door. The opening to the former Hospital Corps Quarters on the second floor, now a large office, has a varnished wood single panel door with sidelights and varnished wood surrounds.
7. **Hardware:** Some original brass door knobs on the wood doors remain; others have been replaced with modern metal knobs.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The building was heated with steam radiators located in the enclosed spaces under the windows. Heat came from Building 4.
 - b. **Lighting:** Virtually all the original lighting has been replaced with fluorescent tube lights. There is one original pendant lamp remaining, in the stairwell. Lamps similar to this one originally hung in the lobby of Building 1 as well.
9. **Furnishings:** There are no original furnishings in Building 2.

D. Site:

1. **General setting and orientation:** Building 2 is set behind a grass lawn, with mature ficus and olive trees. To the rear, enclosed behind barbed wire, is a parking lot.
2. **Historic landscape design:** There are integral raised concrete planters on the south, east, and west elevations, with palm trees at the front entrance. A central planted area is flanked by two concrete sidewalks leading from Richardson Avenue to the front entrance.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings

There are 51 drawings for Building 2 located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard archives. The original drawings are dated June 4, June 24, and July 9, 1941. The alterations date to 1970. The relevant drawings for this documentation follow:

#17013: Floor Plan
#17013: Floor Plan
#17049: Alterations Arch

#17060: First Floor Plan Arch. F1, F2
#17061: Arch. Plan North Wing F1, F2
#17062: Second Floor Plan F1, F2
#17063: Arch. Elevation & Sections F1, F2
#17067: Arch. Interiors F1, F2
#17068: Arch. Interiors F1, F2
#17077: First Floor Plan F1, F2
#17078: Second Floor Plan F1

B. Bibliography

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California*. Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment — Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California*. San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

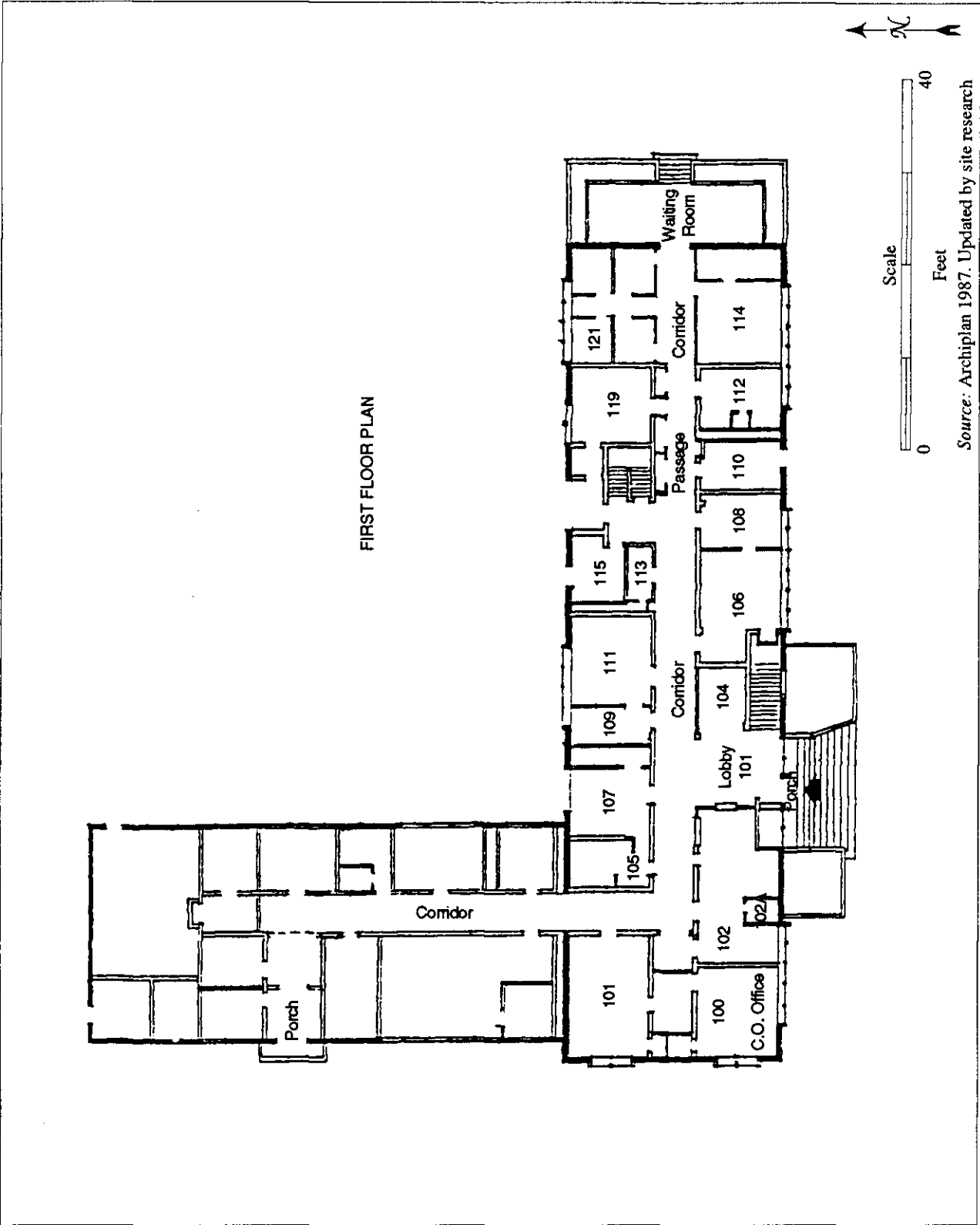
"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

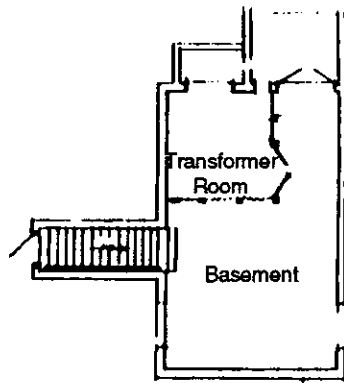
PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer, and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.

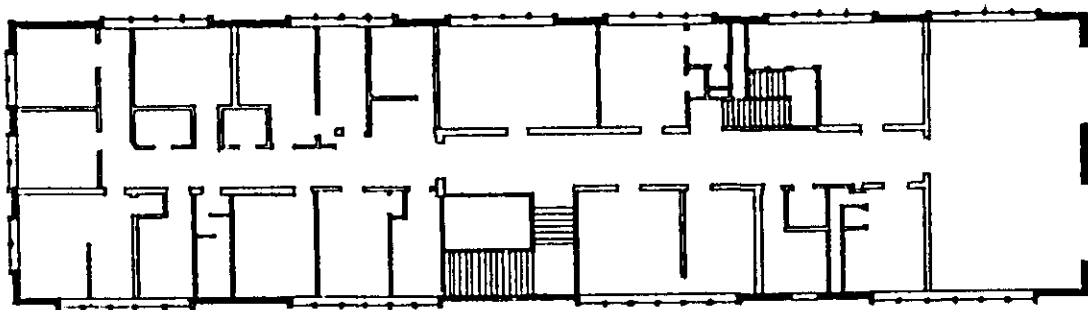


LAYOUT OF BUILDING 2, FIRST FLOOR PLAN. 1996



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Scale
0 40
Feet



Source: Archiplan 1987. Updated by site research